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## ABSTRACT

Designed to be used before and after attending a musical adaptation of Jonathan's Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" (performed by the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia), this cue sheet presents information about the performance and suggests activities that can be done with classmates, friends, or family members. Beginning with an illustration of aspects of the Age of Enlightenment, the cue sheet presents a play map of the travels of Gulliver, activities for before and after the performance, things to look for before and after the performance, lines to listen for, and problems to solve. The cue sheet concludes with advice for being a good audience member and a list of 10 stories, books, and movies that have characters that are too big or too little. (RS)

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# CUE SHEET FOR STUDENTS

Live performers and a variety of puppets from the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia perform this musical adaptation of Jonathan Swift's famous story.

Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia is Atlantic Canada's major theater for family audiences. The company tours Canada annually and has performed in the United States, Japan, Australia, Mexico, and Great Britain.

## WHAT'S IN CUESHEET?

The Age of Enlightenment,  
Jonathan Swift, pages 2 and 3

Traveling with Gulliver.  
A play map, pages 4 and 5

From Story to Stage  
Listen For These Lines  
Look For These Things  
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Being a Good Audience  
Member, Big and Little  
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GULLIVER'S TRAVELS — IT'S OVER 250 YEARS OLD!

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1747)

WROTE GULLIVER'S TRAVELS IN 1726

DURING A TIME CALLED...

# THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

(THAT'S THE  
A TIME FOR NEW IDEAS)

LOOK WHAT WAS

## THE AUTHOR OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS



Jonathan Swift was born to English parents in Dublin, Ireland, in

1667. He became a writer who is known for SATIRE. Satire is writing that tells a story while it makes fun of things that real people do. In *Gulliver's Travels*, Swift wrote about little people and giants who had strange behaviors and customs. He was really writing about the ridiculous way that the English and French people and governments treated each other. His story was written for adults, but it has become popular with children over the years.

Some people thought that Swift was insane. He may have behaved oddly because of a disease which causes dizziness, nausea, and deafness.

Jonathan Swift died in 1747.

AMERICA —  
Benjamin Franklin  
(1706-1790)

discovers the properties of electricity, invents the lightning rod, founds the first public hospital, and the first trained fire department.

FRANCE —  
Denis Diderot  
(1713-1784)

helps edit a 35-volume encyclopedia

AUSTRIA —  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
(1756-1791)  
composes more than 600 pieces of music.

HAPPENING THEN.

You can add to this list.  
What else happened in the  
1700s? What else is over  
250 years old?

AMERICA—  
Eli Whitney  
(1765-1825)  
invents the  
cotton gin.

**FRANCE —**  
Voltaire (1694-1778)  
writes about governments and people ruled by them. He likes Gulliver's Travels so much that he writes another travel story: *Candide*.





"Ahoy there! I'm a British citizen!"



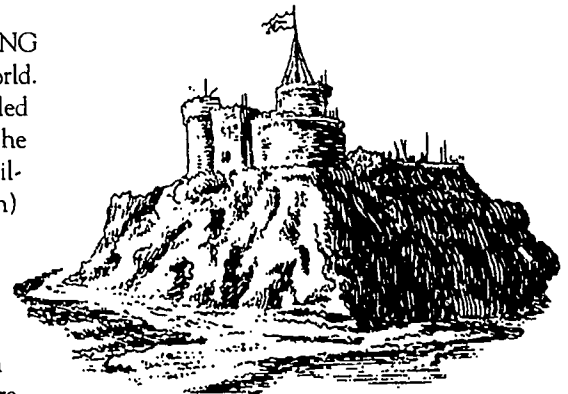
His second voyage lands him in Brobdingnag (BRAB-ding-nag). Here the people are as tall as church steeples. He is befriended by a giant girl and exhibited in a cage at a fair.



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EMUEL GULLIVER IS A YOUNG doctor who sets sail to see the world. On his first voyage, on a ship called "The Wallowing Windowblind," he is shipwrecked on the island of Lilliput (LIL-ee-put). The Lilliputian (LIL-ee-PYU-shin) people are only six inches tall (just taller than a soda can). Lilliput is at war with a neighboring island, Blefescu (BLEH-fez-cue). These tiny nations fight because they disagree over which end of a boiled egg should be broken first. Gulliver defeats the Blefescan navy. He puts out a palace fire, but the Lilliputians are upser 'y how he does it, so Gulliver escapes by boat:



"Blefescu! To the north west of Lilliput!"

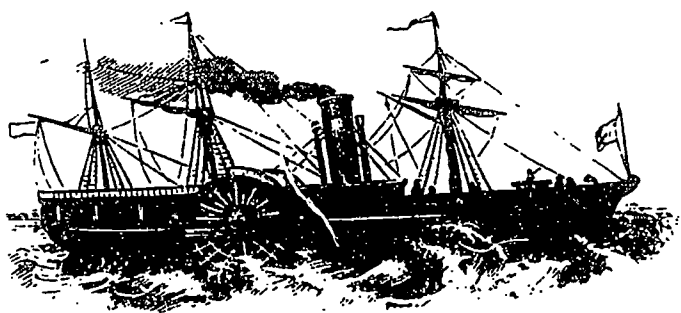


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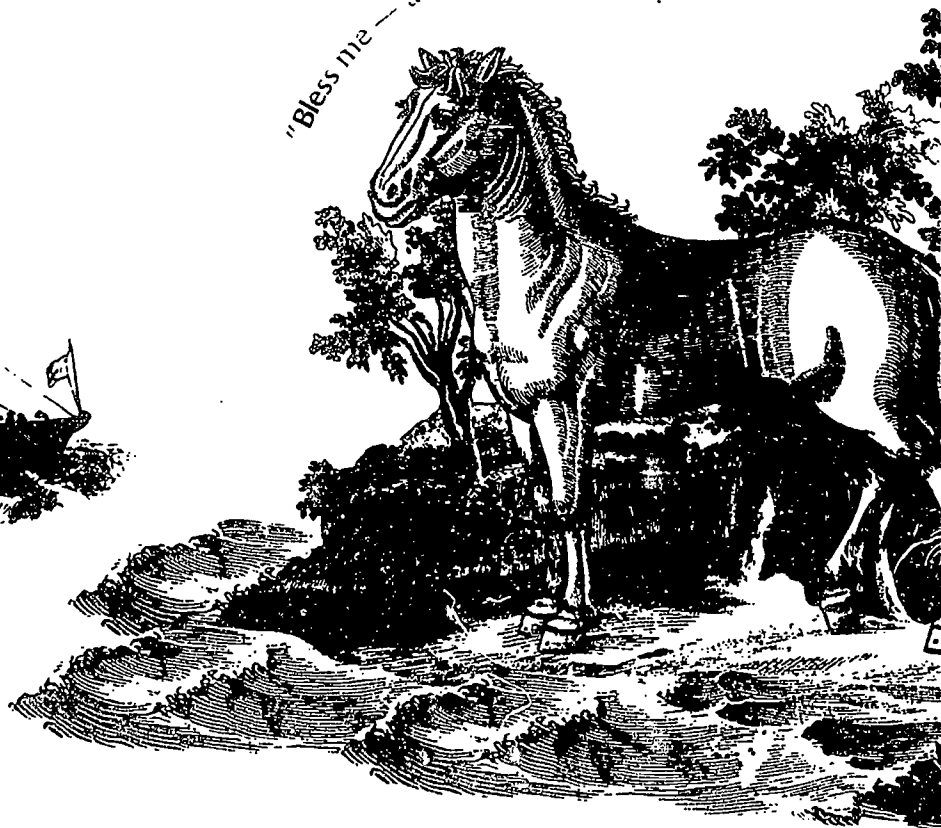


ONE DAY AN eagle seizes Gulliver's cage and carries him out to sea. The eagle drops the cage on a ship headed for England.

*"Bless me — a beast that speaks!"*



Gulliver sets sail for the last time as the captain of his ship. His sailors refuse to work. They mutiny against him and leave him marooned in a land of Yahoos and Houyhnhnms (to pronounce, make a whinny like a horse and then say -IM). Yahoos are hairy humans who work for wise horses, the Houyhnhnms.



The play ends with Gulliver talking to a Houyhnhnm to learn more about this new land.

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# FROM STORY TO STAGE



A person who writes plays is called a playwright.

When a playwright uses another writer's story to create a play, that is

called ADAPTING. The play is an ADAPTATION of the story. In adapting *Gulliver's Travels* for the stage, playwright Alfred Silver made some changes. The basic events of each adventure are the same, but some things have been changed or added or left out.

## BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

You may wish to read one or more sections of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Your library probably has a picture book version. Try to predict what changes a playwright might make in *Gulliver's Travels*. How will Gulliver's adventures be shown on stage? What might be changed or left out? Can you imagine what might be added? Would it be easier to make a movie? Why or why not?

## AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Discuss changes you noticed. Brainstorm some ideas about why the playwright made the choices he did. Discuss whether you agree with and/or like those changes.

## LOOK FOR THESE THINGS

### BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

In plays actors often use objects, called props, which help to tell the story. When you watch *Gulliver's Travels*, look for:

- \* a bottle containing a miniature ship inside
- \* a travel trunk
- \* a thimble
- \* a large blade of grass
- \* an oar
- \* a toy boat

How do you think the actors might use these objects (props) in the play?

### AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Which characters used the objects (props)? Did you notice other props? Were you surprised by how any of the props looked or by how they were used? Why?



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## LISTEN FOR THESE LINES

### BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

A playwright writes lines (dialogue) for actors to speak. Here are some lines that playwright Alfred Silver wrote for *Gulliver's Travels*:

I was doomed to live out my days as the man mountain!

What is worse — they are big enders!

They break the shell at the big end instead of the little end!

Gulliver! Watch where you're stepping!

The palace is on fire!

Oh Gulliver — They mean to kill you!

I'm no Yahoo — I am a British citizen.



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What are some different ways the characters might say each line? (e.g., loudly, softly, impatiently, excitedly, matter-of-factly, etc.?)

Choose one line from the list and ask your friends to say it in as many different ways as possible.

Which line reading do you think is most effective? Why?

### DURING THE PERFORMANCE

Listen carefully for how the actors say the lines.

## PROBLEMS TO SOLVE

### BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

It takes a lot of people to put on a play — actors, directors, designers of costumes, sets, and lights, and many more. All of these people, working together, are called playmakers.

Playmakers have to be creative problem-solvers. Here are some problems that had to be solved for *Gulliver's Travels*. How would you solve them? Think like a playmaker. Remember that you must solve the problems by using music, lights, sound effects, voices, costumes, scenery, puppets, and props. Be careful. Your creative solutions must work on the stage.

**Problem 1:** How can you show these settings:

a ship at sea?

the land of Lilliput, where everyone and everything (except Gulliver) is tiny?

the land of Brobdingnag, where everyone and everything (except Gulliver) is huge?

**Problem 2:** How can the actor playing Gulliver battle a huge mouse?

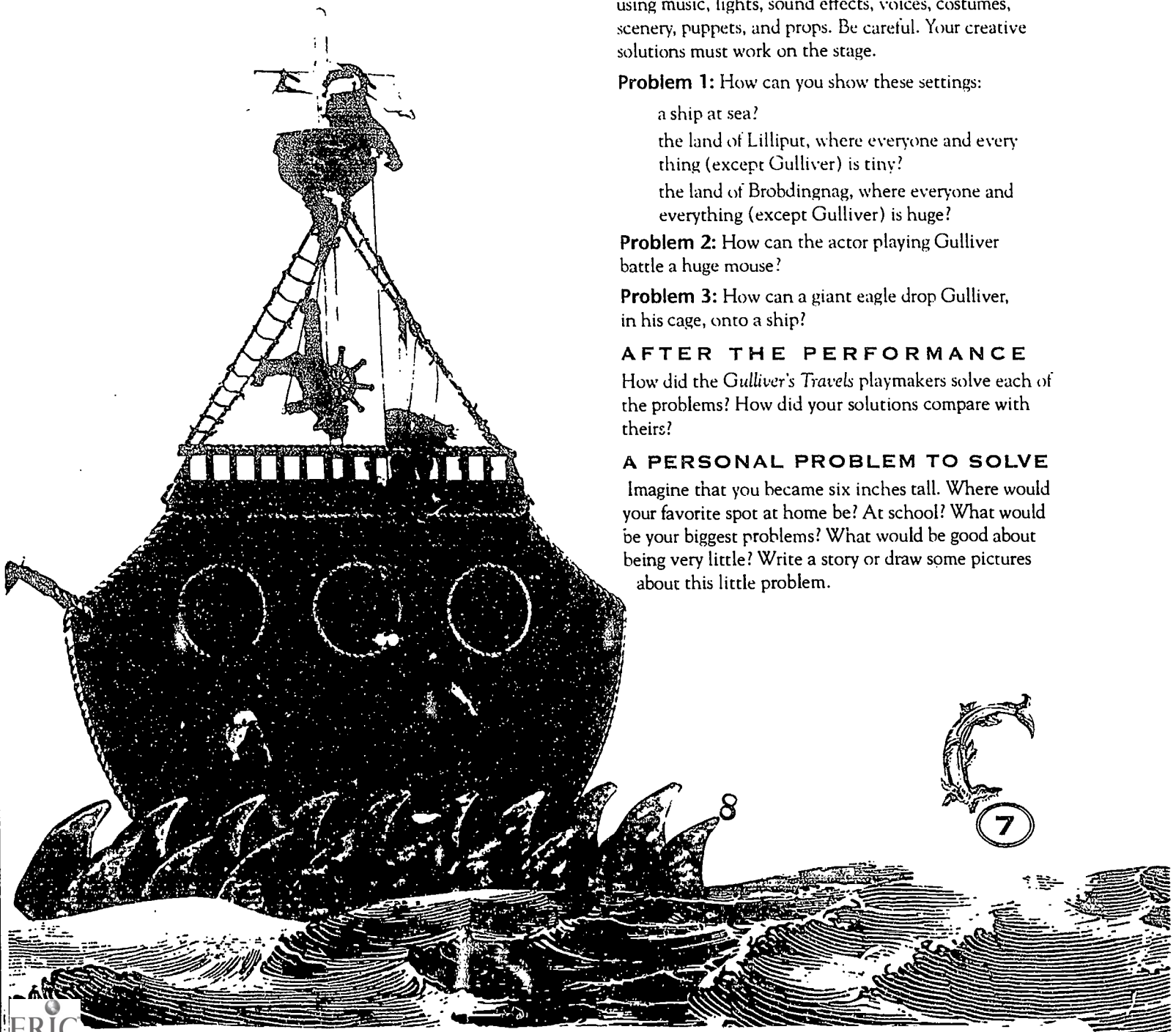
**Problem 3:** How can a giant eagle drop Gulliver, in his cage, onto a ship?

### AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

How did the *Gulliver's Travels* playmakers solve each of the problems? How did your solutions compare with theirs?

### A PERSONAL PROBLEM TO SOLVE

Imagine that you became six inches tall. Where would your favorite spot at home be? At school? What would be your biggest problems? What would be good about being very little? Write a story or draw some pictures about this little problem.





## BEING A GOOD AUDIENCE MEMBER

play asks you to use your imagination. Work with the performers to pretend. Enjoy yourself. Laugh. Applaud. But remember, live theater is different from television and the movies. You and the actors are in the same room. They can hear you. Inappropriate talking and noise can distract actors and disturb other audience members. Help the actors by watching and listening carefully. Do your part as an audience member so that the play is fun for everyone.

Can you promise to be a good audience member? Try following the directions the ruler of Lilliput gave to Gulliver:

\* You must swear in the method prescribed by the laws of Lilliput. Take your left hand, now hold your right foot, then place the middle finger of the right hand upon the crown of your head and the thumb on the tip of your right ear. And say "So Do I Swear."

## BIG AND LITTLE STORIES

There are many stories in which characters have problems because they are too big or too little. Here are a few you might want to read, see, or talk about:

### Stories and Books:

- \* "Tom Thumb"
- \* "Thumbelina"
- \* "Jack and the Beanstalk"
- \* "Issun Boshi: The Inchling," a Japanese Tale
- \* BFG by Roald Dahl
- \* *The Rainbabies* by Laura Krauss Melmed
- \* *The Borrowers* by Marty Norton
- \* *The Littles* by John Peterson

### Movies:

- \* *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*
- \* *Honey, I Blew up the Kids*

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